

Message Text

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46

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 151246Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3246

S E C R E T BANGKOK 9876

EXDIS

STATE PASS SECDEF, COMUSMACTHAI, CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: AMMUNITION IN THAILAND

REF: A) STATE 81254 B) CINCPAC DTG 081615Z APR 76

C) CINCPAC DTG 140247Z APR 76 D) BANGKOK 8548

1. UNDER PRESSURE OF RETROGRADE DEADLINES, CINCPAC IN REF C HAS INSTRUCTED MACTHAI TO COMMENCE SHIPMENT OF U.S. AMMO IN STORAGE AT KHORAT, INCLUDING AIT.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, AIT IS PERHAPS THE MOST SENSITIVE SINGLE FACTOR IN THE U.S.-THAI SECURITY EQUATION AT THIS POINT AS PERCEIVED BY THE THAI. EVEN AS SMALL AN ACTION AS THE REMOVAL OF 8,000 ROUNDS OF 75MM AMMUNITION WAS NOTED WITH CONCERN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN BOTH THE THAI MILITARY AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. AIT IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THAI NATIONAL SECURITY, SINCE IT EQUATES TO 47 DAYS OF THE RTARF'S 60-DAY WRM REQUIREMENT.

3. IN WHAT WE SUPPOSE WAS THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOGNITION OF CINCPAC'S NEARLY MONUMENTAL RETROGRADE PROBLEMS, THE DEPARTMENT ASKED (REF A) OUR ESTIMATE AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING A THAI DECISION BY APRIL 15, IF AN OFFER WERE MADE TO SELL AIT TO THE THAI. WE REPLIED IN REF D. TODAY IS APRIL 15 AND WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN AUTHORIZED TO APPROACH

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THE THAI ON THIS MATTER. THIS HEIGHTENS

CINCPAC'S RETROGRADE PROBLEMS.

4. TO INITIATE THE REMOVAL OF AIT FROM THAILAND WILL BE REGARDED BY THE THAI AS A FIRST-MAGNITUDE SIGNAL OF OUR DETACHMENT FROM THEIR NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS AND WILL GREATLY PREJUDICE BOTH A) SMOOTH CONDUCT OF THE REMAINING RETROGRADE OPERATIONS, AND B) ANY POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS FOR U.S. RESIDUAL ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT THE APPROACH TO THE THAI ON THE POSSIBLE SALE OF AIT SHOULD BE MADE WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY AND THAT THE COMMENCEMENT OF AIT RETROGRADE SHOULD BE DELAYED IN ORDER TO GIVE THE THAI AT LEAST A LITTLE TIME TO MAKE A DECISION. WE RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THIS CREATES FOR U.S. RETROGRADE OPERATIONS AS A WHOLE, BUT WE FELT THERE ARE OVERRIDING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT GO TO THE VERY HEART OF U.S.-THAI RELATIONS.

6. REQUEST IMMEDIATE AUTHORITY TO INITIATE DISCUSSION OF AIT SALE WITH SUPREME COMMAND.
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES

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NNN

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